

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Do I need a sign permit?

A: Most signs require a zoning sign permit; however there are some signs that are exempt and do not require a sign permit.

Q: Does an activity need a zoning permit in order to obtain a sign permit?

A: All activities are required to have a zoning permit BEFORE a sign permit can be issued.

Q: Can I put a sign in the right-of-way?

A: Lexington County Zoning Ordinance states that no sign can be placed in the right-of-way, however if it is a subdivision entrance sign and meets County engineering criteria then it may be allowed in the median. Zoning cannot write a permit for those types of signs, but an encroachment permit must be issued by the Lexington County Public Works Department.

Q: For State sign requirements, who do I call?

A: Contact the local SCDOT Outdoor Advertising Office at 737-1339.

Q: How do I know where the right-of-way is located?

A: Sometimes the right-of-way is marked. If it is a County maintained road, you can contact Lexington County Public Works at 785-8201 for road right-of-way information. If it is State maintained, you can contact 359-4103. The right-of-way line is the same as the adjoining property line.

Q: Can I put a sign on top of a roof?

A: Signs are not allowed to project above the roof line.

Q: I have a home-based business and have received my home occupation zoning permit. Can I put a sign up in my yard?

A: A sign is not allowed to be placed in your yard for a home occupation.

Q: I'm just changing the sign face; do I need a new permit?

A: Yes, even if it is just a face change only. If the rest of the sign is non-conforming (such as setback from right-of-way not met, sign too tall or too large, etc.) and you are only changing the face, the sign does not have to come into compliance with the non-conformity issues. Face change means no copy enlargement or reduction, strictly a face change only.

ZONING FEES

Zoning Permit: Nonresidential.....	\$79 per acre (or portion)
Sign Permit: Business	\$68
Temporary	\$140
Advertising (Billboard)	\$224
Zoning Buffering Restrictions Consent: Nonresidential	\$103
Zoning Variance Request: Nonresidential	\$283

Please note that the entire Development Review and Permit Fee Schedule is available on the Community Development web pages of the Lexington County web site.



IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS TO REMEMBER

Lexington County Administration Building
 212 South Lake Drive, Lexington SC 29072
 4th Floor

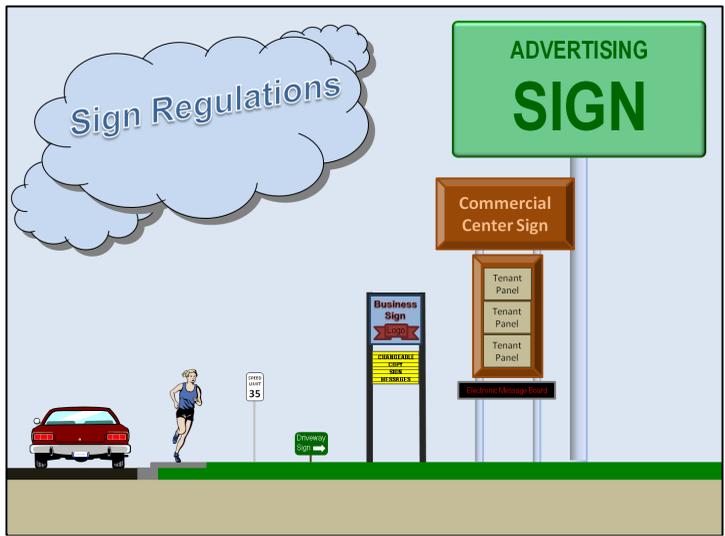
Zoning Office(803) 785-8121

SC Department of Transportation

SCDOT Outdoor Advertising Office(803) 737-1339

Please let us know how we may be of assistance in helping you through the commercial development permitting process.





SIGNS:

UNDERSTANDING SIGN REGULATIONS IN LEXINGTON COUNTY

COUNTY OF LEXINGTON
 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
 212 South Lake Drive, Suite 401
 Lexington, SC 29072

Phone: (803) 785-8121
 Fax: (803) 785-5186

www.lex-co.sc.gov/Departments/DeptAH/CommunityDevelopment

INTRODUCTION

The Lexington County Zoning Ordinance regulates all aspects of signs in unincorporated Lexington County. The five main objectives of the Signs chapter in the Zoning Ordinance are:

- To encourage a high standard for signs to enhance the aesthetic appearance and attractiveness of the community, and to further create an environment that contributes to the ability of the community to attract economic development and growth.
- To ensure safe sign design, installation, and maintenance.
- To minimize distractions and the obstructions-of-views that contribute to traffic hazards and endanger the public.
- To allow for adequate and effective signs for communicating identifications and promoting businesses.
- Ensure that the visibility of signs needed by emergency responders (street name signs, street addresses, etc.) have the greatest importance with consideration for the placement of signs.

PROCESS FOR OBTAINING A SIGN PERMIT

1. Obtain an Application for Sign Review from the Zoning Office or from the web site <http://www.lex-co.sc.gov/Departments/DeptAH/CommunityDevelopment/Documents/Zoning/printable%20forms/sign%20application%20revised.pdf>.
2. *Make note that the application must be fully completed and that a zoning permit/sign review requires two (2) copies of a **site plan drawn to a scale not less than 1 inch equals 30 feet.***
3. The site plan should be submitted **at least 15 days prior to the anticipated issuance of a Zoning Permit/Sign Permit** in order for the Zoning Staff to have adequate time for review. We recommend that you review the Zoning requirements for your activity prior to preparing your site plan.
4. The site plan shall show:
 - The shape and dimensions of the lot on which the proposed sign is to be erected.
 - The width of adjoining road rights-of-way and/or utility easements, and the location of the lot with respect to these rights-of-way. It is the responsibility of the applicant to determine the location of the road right-of-way/property line.
 - The location of all existing and proposed signs on the property, and their distance (in feet) to adjoining properties and road rights-of-way.
 - Any advertising sign site plans must show the location of any other advertising signs within the required radius for

the type of advertising sign being requested.

- The distance from the sign to any overhead power lines. All signs shall maintain clearances from all overhead electrical conductors in accordance with the National Electric Code, provided that no sign shall be installed closer than 10 feet horizontally or vertically from any conductor.
- Diagram showing detail, dimensions, and height of sign.
- As to wall signs, marquee signs, and/or projecting signs, the overall display area and wall elevation must be calculated and shown on a diagram. (Maximum display area is 15 percent of the wall area of the first story on which the sign will be installed. A maximum of 12 feet in height can be used for this 15 percent measurement.)

Any advertising sign proposal for a site on a highway maintained by the South Carolina Department of Transportation must also obtain the proper permits from the SCDOT (it is the sole responsibility of the applicant to obtain these permits regardless of Zoning approval).

EXEMPT SIGNS

Not all types of signs are subject to the sign regulations in Lexington County. There are a select few sign types that are exempt from the sign regulations in the Zoning Ordinance. Several examples are:

1. Signs not exceeding 1 square foot in area and bearing only property numbers, post office box numbers, or names of occupants on premises not having commercial connotations.
2. Legal notices, public information signs, and directional signs erected as required by governmental bodies.
3. Signs not exceeding 4 square feet in area directing and guiding traffic on private property.

For a full list of the exempt signs, see the Lexington County Zoning Ordinance Section 26.20.

PROHIBITED SIGNS

Signs imitating traffic or emergency signals; audible signs; animated, flashing, scrolling, or moving signs; and signs attached to utility poles or street signs or painted on tree trunks, rocks or other natural objects are prohibited in Lexington County.

No portion of any sign shall overhang or encroach upon any public right-of-way.

COMMONLY USED TERMS

Banners: Signs intended to be hung (with or without a frame) with characters, letters, illustrations or ornamentations applied to plastic or fabric of any kind. This excludes flags and emblems of political, professional, religious, educational, governmental, or corporate organizations.

Business Signs: Any sign, pictorial or otherwise that directs attention to a business on the premises where the sign is located or to where it is affixed. Also included are images painted on or affixed to any exterior portion of a business. Also known as on-premise signs.

Changeable Copy Signs: Signs where message copy is changed manually through the utilization of attachable letters, numbers, symbols, and other characters or changeable panels. Poster panels and printed boards are not considered changeable copy signs.

Electronic Message Board: An electrical or electronic sign using digital technology or a pattern of lights to form various words or graphics which is capable of changing copy continuously.

Development/Project Signs: Signs announcing a planned residential, office, business, industrial, or mixed use development.

Off-Premise Signs: Signs which direct attention to a business at a location other than on the premises where the sign is located or to which it is affixed. Including (but not limited to) outdoor advertising signs, billboards, or poster boards.

Portable or Moveable Signs: Any signs, which rest upon, but are not attached to the ground, a structure, a frame building, or other surface. Including (but not limited to) trailer signs, signs mounted to and/or displayed from a parked vehicle, inflatable signs, sandwich board signs.

Real Estate Signs: Signs offering real estate for sale, rent, or lease.

Sign: Any device which informs or attracts attention.

Wall Signs: Signs attached to the exterior wall of a building or structure, which does not extend beyond the building wall more than 12 inches.